



**Public Hearing Testimony of
Sharon Palmer, Commissioner
Department of Labor
Labor and Public Employees Committee
February 19, 2013**

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Tercyak, Senator Markley, Representative Smith and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with testimony regarding **House Bill #6333, AAC the Filing Fee at the State Board of Mediation and Arbitration**. My name is Sharon Palmer and I am the Labor Commissioner.

I am here to speak in favor of this proposal. In 1997, a Program Review and Investigations study reported that since at least 1979, the \$25 filing fee has remained unchanged. The study made the recommendation at that time to raise the filing fee. However, the filing fee has remained unchanged for at least 33 years.

The cost for filing a complaint with SBMA will be higher, which may result in the reduction in what may be seen as frivolous complaints. In 2010-2011 there were 906 grievances filed with a filing fee for each party of \$25.00 for a total income of \$42,250.00. In 2011-2012 there were 718 grievances filed at a total income of \$37,925.00 collected.

If the fee were to be raised to \$100 and 812 grievances were filed (an average of the 2 years above), there would be a total of \$162,400 collected for the general fund.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony here today. I am available to answer any questions you may have.